



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

gians, "I think it not improbable that the word is derivable from two distinct sources, and that in its earlier meaning it has been supplanted by the one derived from the name of the Scottish Presbyterian."<sup>56</sup>

ROGER P. MCCUTCHEON.

Denison University.

---

## 'PRIDE' IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY THOUGHT

In *Mod. Lang. Notes* for April, 1920, Mr. Lucius W. Elder has published a contribution to a type of study which one could wish to see more pursued among us—a study which takes as the ultimate units to which its analysis is to be applied neither individual authors or schools nor literary *genres*, but individual *ideas*, and endeavors to clarify the meaning of each of the fashionable or ruling conceptions, categories, presuppositions, or logical motifs of a period, to discover the reasons for its vogue, to exhibit its interweaving and interaction with other ideas, and to trace its historic workings, not only in the reflection but also in the taste, the practice, and the social movements of the age in which it flourished. Mr. Elder notes that satirists and moralizing writers in the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries were a good deal pre-occupied with a vice which they called "pride," and were given to denouncing this with peculiar vehemence. He therefore inquires into the meaning of this notion, and "its basis and analogue in the speculative theory of the Enlightenment." Mr. Elder has interestingly brought together from a number of eighteenth-century writers material bearing upon this question, and his study will be of use to students of the thought of that period. He has, however, as it seems to me, omitted certain of the most important aspects of the subject; and there is room for dissent from his general conclusions.

Mr. Elder, I think, hardly sufficiently remarks that the pride to which such a typical writer as Pope most frequently refers, in the *Essay on Man*, is not primarily the pride of the individual human creature comparing himself with others of his species, but the generic pride of man as such. The featherless biped, it was observed, has a strange tendency to put himself in the centre of

<sup>56</sup> *Notes and Queries*, 4th Series, v, 472, 14 May 1870.

creation, to suppose himself separated by a vast gap from all other and 'irrational' creatures, to credit himself with the possession of virtues of which he is inherently incapable, and to attempt tasks, especially intellectual tasks, which he has in reality no power to accomplish. A sense of the dignity and importance of the *genus homo* had been fostered by the medieval Christian view of man's place in the universe. Though the Church had bidden the individual man walk humbly with his God, and had dwelt upon the inner corruption of unregenerate human nature, it had nevertheless put before mankind a picture of both the physical and the moral order profoundly flattering to men's racial self-esteem. Around man's planet all the unpeopled spheres revolved; upon that planet he reigned supreme over the brute creation, infinitely removed in dignity from even the highest animals by his sole participation in the intellectual light of the Divine Reason; upon the acts of will of individual men inexpressibly momentous issues depended; and the good which man was capable of attaining immeasurably transcended all that could be experienced in this sublunary world of matter and sense. The first blow to this flattering view was, of course, the overthrow of the geocentric astronomy. But there were certain ideas especially current in (though not original with) the eighteenth century which had a similar tendency.

1. The first of these was among the most characteristic and influential of all eighteenth-century ideas—though you may read many books on the philosophy and literature of that period without ever guessing the fact. I refer to the so-called 'principle of continuity'<sup>1</sup> (*lex continui*), the conception of the "Great Chain of Being." According to this principle, the world is necessarily a *plenum formarum*, a system

Where all must full or not coherent be,  
And all that rises, rise in due degree;

in other words, every logically possible kind of being, through all the infinite graded scale of conceivable 'natures' between Deity and nonentity, must actually exist; and between any two adjacent 'links' in the chain there can be only infinitesimal differences.

<sup>1</sup>The writer has in preparation a study of the place and manifold ramifications of this conception in eighteenth-century literature, science and philosophy.

One of the principal events in European thought in the eighteenth century was the rapid growth of a tendency towards a deliquescence of all sharp distinctions, resulting from the introduction of this assumption that all things must be regarded as parts of a qualitative continuum—the assumption embodied in the maxim *Natura non facit saltus*. Since all gaps thus disappeared from nature, there could be none between man and the other animals. He could differ from them only in degree, and from the higher animals in an almost insensible degree, and only with respect to certain attributes.<sup>2</sup> No link in the Chain of Being, moreover, is more essential than another, or exists merely for the sake of another. The lower creatures are no more means to the convenience of man than he is a means to their convenience.<sup>3</sup> Thus, so long as man remained normal, *i. e.*, in the State of Nature, he assumed no grand airs of superiority to the creatures of the field and wood:

Pride then was not; nor arts that pride to aid;  
Man walked with beast joint-tenant of the shade.<sup>4</sup>

In its most significant aspect, then, 'pride' gets its meaning for eighteenth-century thought from this group of conceptions. It is, in Pope's words, the "sin against the laws of order," *i. e.*, of gradation; it is the vice which causes man to set up pretensions to a place higher in the Scale of Being than belongs to him.

Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,  
Men would be angels, angels would be gods.

The virtue which is its opposite lies in a contented recognition of the limitations of the human lot and the littleness of man's powers;

The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)  
Is not to act or think beyond mankind.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> *Essay on Man*, I, 173 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, III, 22-70, I, 53-68; cf. Voltaire, *Discours sur l'homme*, VI.

<sup>4</sup> *Essay on Man*, III, 151-2. Pope's lines are the probable source of Rousseau's remark, in his second *Discours*, that man's emergence from the pure state of nature began with his invention of certain practical arts, which was followed by "le premier mouvement d'orgueil," in the form of a feeling of superiority to the other animals: "C'est ainsi que sachant encore à peine distinguer les rangs, et se contemplant au premier par son espèce, il se préparoit de loin à y prétendre par son individu."

<sup>5</sup> *Essay on Man*, I, 189-190.

Thus the eighteenth-century denunciations of 'pride' are often, at bottom, expressions of a certain disillusionment of man about himself—a phase of that long and deepening disillusionment which is the tragedy of a great part of modern thought. True, the conception of the Chain of Being owed its vogue largely to its use in the argument for (so-called) optimism; and it had its cheerful aspects. But it clearly implied the dethronement of man from his former exalted position. In the bitter spirit of Swift this disillusionment, tho for other reasons, already touched its extreme; the Yahoo is not merely brought nearer to the other animals, he is placed below them. The most detestable and irrational of beings, he crowns his fatuity by imagining himself the aim and climax of the whole creation. Yet Swift had been anticipated in his opinion of the Yahoo by Robert Gould:

What beast beside can we so slavish call  
As *Man*? Who yet pretends he's Lord of all.  
Whoever saw (and all their classes cull)  
A dog so snarlish, or a swine so full,  
A wolf so rav'nous, or an ass so dull?  
Slave to his passions, ev'ry several lust  
Whisks him about, as whirlwinds do the dust;  
And dust he is, indeed, a senseless clod  
That swells, and yet would be believ'd a God.\*

Two further aspects of the eighteenth-century notion of 'pride' are in part special applications of the principle of continuity, in part consequences of the vogue of certain other conceptions.

2. It was upon his rational faculty and his intellectual achievements that modern man had been wont most to plume himself. But the conception of the graded scale of being tended to fix attention especially upon the limitations of man's mental powers. Moreover, the 'primitivism' which had long been associated with the cult of the sacred word 'Nature' had expressed itself, among other ways, in the disparagement of intellectual pursuits and the depreciation of man's intellectual capacity. In the sixteenth century both Erasmus and Montaigne had dilated upon the vanity of speculation and the corrupting influence of science.

\* Golud's "Satire against Man" (ca. 1708), *Works*, II, 149 f. Gould is an unduly neglected figure in the history of English satire.—It should be added that, as an orthodox churchman, he elsewhere, not too consistently, insists upon man's superiority, as evidenced by his possession of a conscience and an immortal soul.

"In the first golden age of the world," wrote Erasmus, "there was no sort of learning but what was naturally collected from every man's common sense improved by an easy experience. They were not so presumptuous as to dive into the depths of Nature, to labor for the solving all phenomena in astronomy, or to wreak their brains in the splitting of entities and unfolding the nicest speculations, judging it to be a crime for any man to aim at what is put beyond the reach of his shallow comprehension."<sup>7</sup>

This strain, less in evidence in the seventeenth century, the age of great 'systems' in philosophy and science, became in the eighteenth one of the most popular of commonplaces. Finally, the reigning philosophy of the period, in England and France, that of Locke, had as its characteristic aim to fix the boundaries of human knowledge; and it ostensibly found those boundaries to be very narrow.<sup>8</sup> In consequence, chiefly, of the convergence of these three lines of influence, it became customary to berate and satirize all forms of intellectual ambition, and to ascribe to it a great part in the corruption of the natural innocence of mankind. So Pope exhorts:

Trace science, then, with modesty they guide,  
First strip off all her equipage of pride, etc.<sup>9</sup>

The condemnation of 'pride,' then, is frequently, in the eighteenth century, one of the ways of expressing a primitivistic anti-intellectualism. Rousseau was but repeating a current commonplace when he wrote in the *Premier Discours* that "toutes les sciences, et la morale même, sont nées de l'orgueil humain," and

<sup>7</sup> *Moriae Encomium*. For the equation of 'pride' with the spirit of science in Montaigne, cf. the following: "Le soing de s'augmenter en sagesse et en science, ce feut la premiere ruyne du genre humain; . . . l'orgueil est sa perte et sa corruption" (*Apologie de Raimond Sebond*). Note also how closely much of Swift's contrast of the Yahoos and the Houyhnhnms follows Montaigne's comparison of man with the other animals, in the same essay.

<sup>8</sup> *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, I, chap. I, §§ 5-7.

<sup>9</sup> *Essay on Man*, II, 43 ff.; cf. Robert Gould's satirical picture of the scholar's life ("Satire against Man," 167-9) and his praise of the ignorance of the state of nature (170 ff.). In the mid-eighteenth century it is, of course, true that this sort of anti-intellectualism co-existed—sometimes even in the same minds—with that enthusiasm for the "study of nature," i. e., of empirical physical science, of which M. Mornet has admirably written the history in his *Les sciences de la nature en France au 18e siècle*.

that "le luxe, la dissolution et l'esclavage ont été de tout temps le châtiment des efforts orgueilleux que nous avons faits pour sortir de l'heureuse ignorance où la sagesse éternelle nous avait placés."

3. In ethical as in intellectual endeavor, typical moralists of the early eighteenth century believed in a program of limited objectives. Here, again, the tradition of ethical naturalism which had been handed down especially through Erasmus and Montaigne readily combined with the idea of the graded scale of being. Man must not attempt to transcend the limitations of his 'nature'; and his nature, though not the same as that of the animals below him in the scale, is close akin to it. 'Reason' has a part in the conduct of human life; but it is an ancillary part. Pope devotes many lines of versified argumentation to showing that the motive-power and the principal directive force in man's life is—and should be—not reason, but the complex of instincts and passions which make up our 'natural' constitution.<sup>10</sup> 'Pride,' then, in an especially important sense, meant a sort of 'moral overstrain,' the attempt to be unnaturally good and immoderately virtuous, to live by reason alone. Erasmus and Montaigne had come to have an antipathy to this lofty and strenuous moral temper thru a direct revulsion against the revived Stoicism in fashion in the late Renaissance; and the Stoics passed in the eighteenth century for the proverbial embodiments of 'pride' in this sense. Thus Pope describes man as a being "with too much weakness for the Stoic pride"; and Wieland in his *Theages* (1760) remarks that the Stoic pride and self-sufficiency "departs very widely from nature" and "can be possible only in God." "Eben so wenig," he adds, "konnte ich die Unterdrückung des sinnlichen Teils unsers Wesens mit der Natur reimen."

I have dwelt upon this and the preceding aspect of the conception of pride especially because Mr. Elder—like many others before him—seems to me seriously to exaggerate the rationalism of the period, its "extravagant claims to reason," its confidence in "the dry light of reason." Unless "reason" is carefully and somewhat peculiarly defined, such expressions are misleading. The authors who were perhaps the most influential and the most representative in the early and mid-eighteenth century made a great point of reducing man's claims to 'reason' to a minimum, and to belittling

<sup>10</sup> *Essay on Man*, II, 59-202.

the importance of that faculty in human existence; and the vice of 'pride' which they so delighted to castigate was exemplified for them in any high estimate of the capacity of the human species for intellectual achievement, or in any of the more ambitious enterprises of science and philosophy, or in any moral ideal which would make pure 'reason' (as distinguished from natural 'passions') the supreme power in human life. 'Pride' was, indeed, exemplified, for some such writers, in everything 'artificial'; and in the homilies against it the whole gospel of the Return to Nature was often implicit.<sup>11</sup>

ARTHUR O. LOVEJOY.

*Johns Hopkins University.*

---

## REVIEWS

*Etude sur Pathelin*, par RICHARD T. HOLBROOK. [Elliott Monographs] Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, et Paris, E. Champion, 1917. 123 pp. et 23 illustrations.

Emile Picot exprimait en 1904 le vœu qu'une édition critique de la *Farce de Pathelin* fût enfin donnée aux amateurs de l'ancienne littérature française. Or dès 1905 un Américain répondait à cet appel en publiant les premiers travaux d'approche vers une édition définitive. J'ai nommé Richard Thayer Holbrook.

I. L'*Etude sur Pathelin* qu'il vient de nous donner est faite suivant la méthode qui marquait d'une empreinte personnelle ses articles de *Modern Philology* de 1905 et des *Modern Language*

<sup>11</sup>I have not attempted in this brief note to touch upon another movement of ideas in the eighteenth century concerning 'pride'—the doctrine that pride, in the sense of the craving for that which will feed the individual's feeling of distinction and superiority, is, on the whole, though an irrational, a socially beneficent, passion of the human animal. This appears in its most extreme form in Mandeville, who makes 'pride' the basis of all social order; but Hume goes farther towards this conclusion than Mr. Elder quite indicates, and a kindred conception plays a large part in Adam Smith's profound and subtle analysis of the 'moral sentiments.' Mandeville was one of those who helped to give currency to the premise accepted by the primitivists: science, industry, the arts, luxury and trade are all born of pride. But from this premise he drew the opposite inference; since civilization, if not a good, is at least a necessary evil, 'pride,' which is its moving force, is a kind of useful folly.